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ART. I. *Lalla Rookh, an oriental Romance.* By Thomas Moore.
Philadelphia, M. Thomas, 1817. 12mo, pp. 335.

WHATEVER may be Mr. Moore's rank, in this age of firm and healthy poetry, he has certainly contrived to make himself notorious and popular. As he has never stood in the way of his brethren, they have agreed very generally to live upon good terms with him--sometimes intimating, in a mincing way, that he is rather too much of a rake among the muses, but oftener extolling him for what he has achieved, and more especially for what he promises. Such an idolater of freedom, both within doors and without, could hardly fail to be a favourite with libertines and patriots. At carousals, he has been hailed as a sort of enchanter, who could mingle sentiment and enthusiasm with excesses, which heaven had made merely vulgar and sensual. Harlotry has found in him a bard to smooth her coarseness and veil her effrontery, to give her languor for modesty, and affectation for virtue. In short, though his poetry hitherto appears to have been little more than a mixture of musick, conceit and debauchery, he has certainly found favour every where; and there may be thousands, who have read him over and over again, with only faint shocks to their delicacy or consciences, who will yet think we are using very coarse language and much too plain dealing, towards a poet, who tells us the strangest of things in the sweetest of ways.

Further than this, he is thought by some to be a wild, luxurious bard, who is to pass through a generous and yet repressing culture, from the frolicks of blooming time, to a full, rich, and sober maturity—whose early licentiousness shews ‘a leaning after the better affections’—whose impurity has its redeeming graces,—whose errors deserve merciful allowances, because they are on the side of sentiment and greatness. Now he is almost the last poet, for whom we should have thought of setting up the apology of a violent, overrunning nature. We have never lamented in him the oppression or waste of genius, nor the perversions of a fine spirit, whose abandoned gayety would one day mellow into warm-hearted cheerfulness, and its voluptuous excesses end in singleness and purity of love. He discloses no warm and eager aspiring after something higher and purer, with a promise of lending by and by to goodness, the graces and enthusiasm he had wasted upon vice. His mind never seems to be unconsciously wrong, from rapture, spontaneous overflow and impulses that will not be ruled. We can discover no depth in his contrition, nor desertion in his grief, nor involuntary glow and tenderness in his friendship.

And we may be allowed to express a doubt, whether his transgressions are quite consistent with powerful genius and deep feeling, with fine moral sensibility, and a religious love of nature. His voluptuousness appears to be the coldest thing in the world, as remote as possible from sudden and momentary fervour. It has not the spirit of wild, careless, social frolick, which burns and goes out in a night; the gay and passing frivolity of a mind in idleness. It is the business of his leisure and retirement, the creature and plaything of his imagination. He is at home and most heartily at work, when his subjects are licentious. His mind, instead of withering, seems freest and happiest in fine elaborations of impurity, in soiling what is fair, and then garnishing it. He sometimes ventures upon a loathsome anatomy and exposure; and if he had always done so, the mischief would have been less to himself and the reader, as both would have been shortly disgusted. There is no fear that truth will ever do harm. The evil is, that when vice is brought into poetry, its grossness and vulgar sufferings are kept very much out of sight. It is rarely picked up in the streets, and placed before you, with all the plain tokens of decay and dishonour

which nature has set upon it. Guilt is associated with kindly feelings, and placed in the midst of honourable dangers and sacrifices ; it passes through deep intellectual agonies, and is made to exert a constant influence upon the happiness of the pure and lovely, whose affections it contrives to secure. The licentious appear merely to have thrown off the imprisonment of the staid and narrow prejudices of an earlier age, and to come out now into the open world, with free hearts, to feast upon its pleasures. The senses and appetites take the place of passion and sentiment, but the old phrases and allusions, which were so sweet and heart-breathing with the innocent, are still preserved by the impure. Though they renounce the severer morals and decencies, they have still an easy, flaunting virtue and romantick devotedness to beguile you with. You will hear of heaven in all their raptures ; the eye, and smile, and blush are still eloquent. There are unkind wrongs and tender forgiveness, with tears and laments for a mistress in heaven. Even nature, with all its coolness and loveliness, must minister to impurity. Its fine forms and hues serve as images of personal beauty, its odorous winds for the fragrance of sighs, its holy seclusions for shelter from the eye and sun ; and as for evening, when poetry and soberness were once allowed to walk forth, as if the hour were theirs, why

‘ None but the loving and the loved
Should be awake at this sweet hour.’

You would suppose that the world was turning to Eden again, as man became the indolent worshipper of love, reposing in cool vallies, and piping voluptuous lays under bowers of myrtle. And all this illusion is managed with exquisite skill and delicacy. Sufficient care is taken to refine and set off the coarsest indulgences, without removing their earthiness—to mingle sensual and poetical joys till they shall qualify each other, that the one may not be too gross nor the other too pure—to throw over every thing one of Mr. Moore’s luxurious twilights, which shall dim or soften whatever is holy or disgusting, and give it at the same time a hue of voluptuousness. It must not be supposed that this love-poetry tends to make men coarse by making them impure.

It would teach you rather, that ‘vice loses half its evil by losing all its grossness.’ It even countenances shame, though only enough to keep up a vicious eagerness for pleasure, by a faint consciousness that it is not quite blameless, and therefore must be secret. It allows of remorse too, so far as it may remind one vividly of the scenes and excesses he has gone through, without strengthening or forcing him to abandon them.

Mr. Moore may be very adroit at this work—he may call it poetry if he pleases; but he must allow us to infer from the pleasure he takes in it, that his mind is not of the loftiest character, nor ever under the influence of genuine enthusiasm and rapture. There does seem to be a natural alliance between genius and purity. A man, who can pass through his earliest years, with no love of intellectual dignity, no regret for the sins of his race, nor wish to make them better, unmoved, unchastened by the sweet influences of nature, and deliberately and almost perpetually employed, in disfiguring and degrading every thing pure in sentiment, or fair in creation, must be essentially wanting in some of the higher powers and perceptions of a truly poetical mind. He will never be lifted from the ground, nor forget for a moment the incumbrances of flesh and blood. Let him write upon any topick, the most heavenward in its influences, as simple and delicate as infancy itself, and there will be a stain of earth over the whole.—It is the custom with most criticks, who undertake Mr. Moore, first to read him a lecture upon his sins, and proceed forthwith to congratulate him upon his reformation. We should certainly follow their example throughout, did we not feel, even with the Gospel Melodies before us, that he is not yet quite restored. We may almost take up the words of his Peri against him;

‘Some flowrets of Eden ye still inherit,
But the trail of the serpent is over them all.’

We have intimated that Mr. Moore is artificial. With the most graceful facility of expression, with verse that sparkles and warbles through volumes, he is always exact, and polished,* never loose but in sentiment. A sort of

* We must except the slovenly versification of the first poem in *Lalla Rookh*. Mr. Moore appears here to have fallen into a childish imitation of the errors of cotemporary bards, who, he should have remembered, are much less indebted than himself to outward grace.

verbal beauty, a poetry of sound is sustained throughout, let the thought be ever so poor, or vulgar, and almost any thing may find its way to the heart, that glides thither so musically. We have found ourselves humming with most thoughtless complacency, that aerial verse ;

‘ One blossom of heaven outblossoms them all ;’—

and there may be tenderer spirits, that have sung his less innocent lays, and thought that nothing impure could float upon such rich harmony. But so it is. The wind sweeps over the lyre, and there is exquisite minstrelsy, whether it steal with pestilence from the swamps, or ‘ as the sweet south, that breathes upon a bank of violets.’

But are we insensible to Mr. Moore’s fancy ? Certainly not—a more ingenious and indefatigable one we **are** unacquainted with—such an array of tropes and images may have never before been marshalled, even by the most downright oriental, as he has so beautifully set in order. Still we have a feeling to subdue within us, that these, for the most part, are mere ornaments and appendages—any thing but illustration or a poetical embodying of thought. They do not yield a warm, living illumination, that mingles naturally with the scenes it falls on, and is perceived only by the gladness and distinctness which it sheds. They are sought and finished with apparent diligence and anxiety, and instead of taking a subordinate place, they stand apart for independent notice and admiration, and glitter as if in pride of their own beauty. In many cases, the thought seems to be introduced, and in a particular shape and relation, for **no** other purpose than to justify some beautiful comparison. The image generally bears to the subject, which it pretends to illustrate, a cold, exact, quaint resemblance, affording, indeed, very pleasant surprises to those, who think the matter in hand too plain to need, or too poor to deserve illustration ; but the imagination is quite still—it enjoys none of the associations, with which it is sometimes crowded by a single epithet, in its just place. On the contrary, the reason is made busy in following out the curious similitudes, and the exquisite art, with which the poet adapts them. And one must be under high poetical excitement, in the very humour to follow the subject, after stopping to try his ingenuity upon these gay conceits ; and the artist must resume his

business with most absorbing zeal, after waiting so long and so happily to set a jewel. But in all probability there is no excitement on either side—the reader is looking for fanciful, artificial *prettinesses*, and the poet is busy in furnishing them.

We may expect to hear that these remarks are owing, after all, to our own insensibility to genuine warmth, and the colouring of beauty—that our taste, such at least as we have, is timid and cruel, too easily alarmed at violence and splendour. However this may be, the impression we have received from Mr. Moore's writings has always been, that his fervour, luxuriance and beauty, notwithstanding his easy flow of expression, are studied and artificial. The 'hurry and glow of composing,' the freedom of a full heart, have very unequivocal tokens, to make themselves known. No artifice can wholly conceal the expression of sincere feeling, and no artifice can absolutely imitate it. The distinction is essential and imperishable, between the burning language in which passion relieves itself, and that which is the mere substitute and hypocrisy of passion.—As for love, (without professing to be adepts that way,) we can readily comprehend the old fashioned criticism, that no man could hum upon it so elegantly and incessantly as Mr. Moore has done, who had ever known its inwardness and mute significance. But sometimes he assays to be seriously in love—he would be natural and tender, and touch you by that innocent vagueness of expression, which hides the want of feeling in the cold, and betrays its unutterableness in the ardent. But to us there is even here more of inanity than sentiment, of the Haram than the fire-side, of whine and effeminacy than of deep, self-sacrificing tenderness, and oftener perhaps than all, the elegant common places of gallantry, which a man whispers to those he does not respect, and is accustomed to flatter.

Mr. Moore has great ease and sprightliness of narrative, a graceful airiness in touching and leaving a subject, sufficient variety of thought, though too much sameness in the colouring, with verse that flows in perpetual song, and figures that scatter a sparkling brilliancy from beginning to end. This, certainly, is quite enough for modish poetry. He is never lost in the depths or fulness of his mind. He is rarely disturbed by great efforts; and if he venture at times beyond

the limits of the poetry, he has prescribed to himself as most congenial and manageable, he contrives to reduce his subject to such shape and proportions, as will allow him to play with it easily and gracefully. It appears to be his main object to do things elegantly, as if his readers were forever about him, and they too, perfectly fashionable and well drest. This disposition is especially manifest in his descriptions of external nature. The world is but dim and coarse in his eyes, and so he exhibits it in a sort of gay transparency, as if gairishness became it better than the vesture it received from its former, as if the array of the lily were not before all artificial glory. He delights in luxurious clusters of gorgeous, showy objects, upon which art has bestowed care and polish, more than in minute discriminations of nature in her simple, careless forms and colours and situations. He loves to tamper with creation and subdue it, even though he should make its serenity lifeless, its magnificence gaudy, and its wild grandeur trim and sedate. In a forest, we should expect to see him lead the vine about the rough trunks; smooth the roots with the ground and lay turf upon them; hang lights in the leaves, and stir them gently with sighs, while a ruder adventurer would love them in their own solemnity, as they rustled and glittered in the winds and moonlight. And yet he always glides along and works so gracefully, as if listening to musick, and offers so much to glance at, and so little to detain, that it is hardly possible to be wearied, even if we are never wholly satisfied. We must not expect him to make us better acquainted with nature, or more open to its moral and renovating influences by shewing us how the spirit of God still moves upon the work of his hands. We must look elsewhere for the remembered poetry, that mingles with our oldest and dearest thoughts, leaving enduring pictures with us, and sending thrills to the heart, that will never die.

We fear we shall never give Mr. Moore credit for a single excellence, nor feel in good humour with him, till we leave this general criticism, and come to particular passages. Perhaps we have gone so far in our censures, that we can hardly call him a poet now, or admit that he has a delicate perception of beauty, without falling into inconsistency. But he has certainly written enough fine poetry, to make one lament, that bad morals and taste should have drawn from him so much that is worthless. He is thought by some to

have been in a good way of late, especially in his Irish and Gospel Melodies, and nobody will dispute that the present work fulfils very honestly, any expectations, which those or any of his former pieces, could have reasonably inspired. He has probably begun to think seriously of a more creditable immortality than his younger poems could have purchased. And it is a little unfortunate that, just as he had set about improvement, he should have made the East his poetical home, where his old relish for unwedded love, and never ending conceits and brilliancy, may be regaled more than ever, and where the poet himself, in the guise of an eastern minstrel, is tempted, and with less hazard, to repeat his early transgressions.

The work before us gives a very pleasant story in prose, of the journey of Lalla Rookh, a princess of Hindostan, from Delhi to Cashmere, where she was to be met for the first time, and espoused by the young king of Bucharia, to whom she had been betrothed. At first, she found enough to delight her in the beauty and novelty of the scenes she was passing through, and as these faded, in the songs and dances of her attendants. Her diversions, however, were at last all exhausted, when it was recollected, that among the attendants, who had been sent by the bridegroom, was a young poet of Cashmere, on whom the king had conferred the privilege of being admitted to the pavilion of the princess, that he might beguile the tediousness of the way by recitals of eastern stories. It was natural that the princess should love the poet for his beauty and song, and that he should love her for her charms and sympathy. It was equally in the course of things, that she should discover in the sovereign at Cashmere the humble minstrel, who had won her heart on the way. The great chamberlain, Fadladeen, is a very important personage, through whom Mr. Moore communicates much pleasant criticism on his own work ; and we only regretted seeing it, from our conviction that a man never thinks seriously of correcting a fault, which he anticipates others in exposing. The story is very short, and from time to time, interrupted by the minstrel, who, in the course of it, recites four distinct poems. These we shall proceed to notice.

We shall give an outline of the first, both because the story is a curiosity, and as we shall be able in this way to

introduce more conveniently the few passages we wish to extract. We shall avoid as much as possible the treasures of Eastern learning, by which the poet strives to illumine, and succeeds in burdening and disfiguring every poem in the book.

The Prophet of Khorassan, according to Fadladeen, is 'an ill-favoured gentleman, with a veil over his face,' flung there, as he pretended, to hide the miraculous glory of his brow, but in fact to conceal his hideousness. He seems to have been set against mankind a little after the manner of Richard.

'But turn and look—then wonder if thou wilt,
That I should hate, should take revenge, by guilt,
Upon the hand, whose mischief or whose mirth
Sent me thus maim'd and monstrous upon earth ;
And on that race who, though more vile they be
Than mowing apes, are demi-gods to me !
Here—judge if hell, with all its power to damn,
Can add one curse to the foul thing I am.' p. 43.

He appears first in his *Divan*, surrounded by a gorgeous array of awe-struck followers, for the purpose of receiving a young, enthusiastick proselyte, who had just returned from bondage in Greece, full of liberty and perfectibility. Azim makes his obeisance, and Mokanna, the Prophet, (who is a thorough French Jacobin, in every thing but his white flag,) harangues the multitude.

'————— this sword must first
The darkling prison-house of mankind burst,
Ere peace can visit them, or truth let in
Her wakening day-light on a world of sin.
But then celestial warriors, then when all
Earth's shrines and thrones before our banner fall,
When the glad slave shall at these feet lay down
His broken chain, the tyrant lord his crown,
The priest his book, the conqueror his wreath,
And from the lips of truth one mighty breath
Shall like a whirlwind, scatter in its breeze
That whole dark pile of human mockeries ;—
Then shall the reign of mind commence on earth,
And starting fresh, as from a second birth,
Man in the sunshine of the world's new spring,
Shall walk transparent like some holy thing.' p. 20.

He is equally ambitious to improve the condition of woman, and accordingly his *Haram* is supplied with the fairest

‘from every beauteous race beneath the sun,’ that he may give them a holy education, and make of them ‘a young nursery for heaven.’ In this ‘galaxy of lips and eyes,’ is a beautiful young maniac, who had entered the Haram in the rapturous belief, that she should be trained up there, to be the bride in paradise of a lover, whom she supposed to be dead. Her burning spirit is here wrought upon to her ruin, so that she even glories in being the honoured victim of Mokanna, fondly dreaming that in yielding to him, she gave herself to heaven. The real horror of this is somewhat relieved by their private wedding in the charnel-house, where she binds herself to the prophet forever, over a bowl of ‘red charnel wine.’ It is further relieved by some unusual phenomena in Zelica’s madness, for not only does her reason come and go at Mr. Moore’s pleasure, but even while utterly deranged, she is at times a perfectly unconscious sinner, at others, the slave of zeal and ambition, aware of Mokanna’s treachery and her own guilt, but afraid to amend her ways, because of her oath, and even hoping that her patient continuance in evil doing, will most effectually purify her spirit. This may be honest delirium, but we should not be surprised, if it were utter nonsense.

With her delirious raptures are mingled the fire and glare of something unholy. The picture of her dishonoured beauty is mournful enough ; but Mr. Moore hangs over it with too much complacency.

‘Light, lovely limbs, to which the spirit’s play
 Gave motion, airy as the dancing spray,
 When from its stem the small bird wings away !
 Lips, in whose rosy labyrinth, when she smil’d,
 The soul was lost ; and blushes, swift and wild
 As are the momentary meteors sent
 Across th’ uncalm but beauteous firmament.
 And then her look !—oh ! where’s the heart so wise,
 Could unbewilder’d meet those matchless eyes ?
 Quick, restless, strange, but exquisite withal,
 Like those of angels, just before their fall ;
 Now shadow’d with the shames of earth, now crost
 By glimpses of the heaven her heart had lost ;
 In every glance there broke, without controul,
 The flashes of a bright but troubled soul,
 Where sensibility still wildly play’d,
 Like lightning, round the ruins it had made.’ p. 27.

Zelica and the rest of the 'sainted colony' were hidden spectators of Azim's publick reception, and she recognizes in the proselyte her long-lost lover, of whose heart, we may remember, she hoped to be more worthy in heaven, by the purifying influences of transgression upon earth,

'————— as perfumes rise,

'Through flame and smoke, most welcome to the skies.' p. 30.

The sight of Azim restores her reason sufficiently to apprize her of her condition in the Haram, but not to confirm in her the purpose of virtue. Her oath in the charnel-house rushes over her, and buries her in darkness again. At this moment, she is summoned to attend Mokanna in his place of prayer, and as she was now, for the first time, slow in obeying the call, he has leisure to rail awhile at mankind for standing in awe of such a wretch as himself. There he lay, upon his couch in the cool 'garden oratory,' with soft lights around him, such as 'lovely maids look loveliest in,' covered with his silver veil, drinking largely of white wine and red, pondering in deep reverie, and then bursting out in the merriest and most vulgar abuse of human nature.

He has none of Timon's sad, vehement misanthropy, nor of Richard's malicious scorn and fine sarcasm, nor of Satan's proud vindictiveness and unguarded sorrow. He is, as we hinted before, a sour Jacobin, some low, clamorous ruffian, suddenly grown up to be a gentleman. His character exhibits, for a time, with considerable clearness and consistency, a combination of vile and prosperous insolence with lust and malignity—no very tempting compound, we admit, either in life or poetry, though it might require some skill, to form and preserve it. But Mr. Moore was too delicate an artist to rest satisfied with the close truth of a low, vicious character. Because the prophet was vigorous, cunning and fearless, he must needs be invested with grandeur, and become a finished gallant, a subtle poisoner of innocence and a sublime warrior. To render him still more poetical, Mr. Moore has made a desperate effort to give him the ferocious levity and deadly irony, which sometimes throw a gleam of frightful mirth over a dark and severe character, deepening its malignity and horror, like the grim smile, that glares amidst the scowls and shadow, the solitude and midnight of the countenance. Mokanna, however, remains inflexibly vulgar, in spite of all that

Mr. Moore can do to heighten or rather mar his character. We may observe here, that he rarely looks upon a character as an individual, or a consistent whole. He appears to have certain prominent abstract qualities, virtues or vices, in store, which he has determined to attach to the first poetical personage, that comes in his way. He only wants an opportunity to bring them forward—it is of no concern to him whether the character hangs well together, is governed by any single principle, in a word, whether it has individuality or not. This may account for the singular incongruity of some of his characters and the ostentatious insignificance of others.—But to return.—

Poor Zelica, who has heard a good deal of the soliloquy, startles him at length by a piteous exclamation ; but our prophet, recovering himself, turns to her with the wildest gallantry of a modern rake, and begs her, for the sake of her soul and eyes, to take some inspiring juice, which Genii had brought him from the upper sphere,—for, that night, he must rely upon the power of her perfect beauty, to vanquish the virtue, as the world called it, of young Azim, and soften his heart for the reception of religious impressions. Her answer is a little too declamatory, but with an expression at times, of horror, tenderness and despair.

‘ ————— Great God ! to whom
I once knelt innocent, is this my doom ?
Are all my dreams, my hopes of heavenly bliss,
My purity, my pride, then come to this,—
To live, the wanton of a fiend ! to be
The pander of his guilt.’ ————— p. 38.

‘ And sunk, myself, as low as hell can steep
In its hot flood, drag others down as deep !
Others ?—ha ! yes—that youth who came to-day—
Not him I lov’d—not him ?’ ————— p. 39.

‘ Must *he* too. glorious as he is, be driven
A renegade like me from love and heaven ?
Like me ? weak wretch, I wrong him—not like me ;
No—he’s all truth, and strength and purity !
Fill up your madd’ning hell-cup to the brim,
Its witchery, fiend, will have no charm for him.
Let loose your glowing wantons from their bowers,
He loves, he loves, and can defy their powers !
Wretch as I am, in *his* heart still I reign
Pure as when first we met.’ —————

'Far off to some benighted land I'll fly,
 Where sunbeam ne'er shall enter till I die ;
 Where none will ask the lost one whence she came,
 But I may fade and fall without a name !
 And thou—curst man or fiend, whate'er thou art,
 Who found'st this burning plague-spot in my heart,
 And spread'st it,—Oh, so quick !—thro' soul and frame
 With more than demon's art, till I became
 A loathsome thing, all pestilence, all flame !—
 If, when I'm gone —————' p. 40.

The prophet breaks in, and repays her at first with the coarsest taunts, and then with harsh violence, like one who loves to crush the weak, and deride the sorrows of the proud as well as humble. And when he finds this unavailing, he subdues her by recalling her oath and the private wedding, assures her that he is a knave, favours her with a sight of his face, and all this to prevail upon her to seduce her own lover. Surely our prophet wants even the poor virtue of jealousy, as well as a moderate share of sagacity.

Mr. Moore is of course quite at home in the Haram, where we are detained some time, by Eastern luxuries of all sorts, from the arts of elegance to those of seduction.

The younger part of the sisterhood are out in the moonlight, gathering fresh chaplets for their heads, and there is something cool and innocent in their remembrance of home.

'Gay creatures ! sweet, though mournful 'tis to see
 How each prefers a garland from that tree,
 Which brings to mind her childhood's innocent day,
 And the dear fields and friendships far away.
 The maid of India, blest again to hold
 In her full lap the Champac's leaves of gold,
 Thinks of the time, when, by the Ganges' flood,
 Her little playmates scatter'd many a bud
 Upon her long black hair, with glossy gleam
 Just dripping from the consecrated stream.
 While the young Arab, haunted by the smell
 Of her own mountain flowers, as by a spell,
 Sees, call'd up round her by these magic scents,
 The well, the camels, and her father's tents ;
 Sighs for the home she left with little pain,
 And wishes e'en its sorrows back again.' p. 47.

Mr. Moore should have dreaded the interview between Azim and Zelica. Nothing in the story offers more for poetry, but it called for real passion—it required a poet, who could understand the heart when it was in earnest, and lend it simple utterance. It was a time to throw aside all mockery, all consciousness of art, all the vanity of this world, and suffer passion to have entire sway, whether it poured in grief, or imploring remorse or perfect love.—Zelica swoons as she approaches Azim, and he, after slowly recognizing her, breathes in this strain, his sweetest consolation and sympathy.

‘Come, look upon thy Azim—one dear glance,
Like those of old, were heaven! whatever chance
Hath brought thee here, Oh! ’twas a blessed one!
There—my sweet lids—they move—that kiss hath run
Like the first shoot of life through every vein,
And now I clasp her, mine, all mine again!’ p. 65.

To avert his desperate anguish, when he learns her fallen condition, she enters at once into an explanation of her conduct, but in a strain that partakes more of narrative tranquillity than of strong passion or subdued grief. She closes with as much resignation as we expected.

‘Thou weep’st for me—do, weep—Oh! that I durst
Kiss off that tear! but, no—these lips are curst,
They must not touch thee;—one divine caress,
One blessed moment of forgetfulness
I’ve had within those arms, and *that* shall lie,
Shrin’d in my soul’s deep memory till I die!
That last of joy’s last relics here below,
The one sweet drop in all this waste of wo,
My heart has treasur’d from affection’s spring,
To sooth and cool its deadly withering!’ p. 68.

Azim is nearly frantick, when she assures him that guilt has separated her from him forever—but he seems to have caught a little of her composed manner of speaking. We suspect they are both merely manufacturing verses, and thinking chiefly of some beautiful images which they are anxious to bring in.

‘Zelica, Zelica!’—the youth exclaim’d,
In all the tortures of a mind inflam’d
Almost to madness—‘by that sacred heaven,
Where yet, if pray’rs can move, thou’lt be forgiv’n,

As thou art here—here, in this writhing heart,
 All sinful, wild and ruin'd as thou art !
 By the remembrance of our once pure love,
 Which, like a church-yard light, still burns above,
 The grave of our lost souls—which guilt in thee
 Cannot extinguish, nor despair in me !
 I do conjure, implore thee to fly hence—
 If thou hast yet one spark of innocence,
 Fly with me from this place,' ————— p. 69.

She accedes to the proposal with nearly as much ardour as Azim had shewn in making it. Her words are even breathless, if you will believe Mr. Moore.—For example.

' ————— with thee ! oh bliss !
 'Tis worth whole years of torment to hear this.
 What ! take the lost one with thee ? let her rove
 By thy dear side, as in those days of love,
 When we were both so happy, both so pure—
 Too heavenly dream ! if there's on earth a cure
 For the sunk heart, 'tis this,—day after day
 To be the blest companion of thy way ;—
 To hear thy angel eloquence—to see
 Those virtuous eyes forever turn'd on me ;
 And in their light rechasten'd silently,
 Like the stain'd web that whitens in the sun,
 Grow pure by being purely shone upon.' p. 70.

But Mokanna's voice is heard reminding her of her oath, which palsies her virtue at once, leaving her strength enough, however, to rush from her lover, after giving him a very particular account of her wedding in the charnel house. This wedding is in fact the spice of almost all the dialogue in the poem.

The Caliph is at length startled by the impious pretensions of the impostor, and comes out to overwhelm him. We find ourselves at once in the heart of his camp, and it is full of splendour and life.

' Whose are the gilded tents that crowd the way,
 Where all was waste and silent yesterday ?
 This city of war which, in a few short hours,
 Hath sprung up here, as if the magic powers
 Of Him who, in the twinkling of a star,
 Built the high pillar'd halls of Chilminar,
 Had conjur'd up, far as the eye can see,
 This world of tents and domes and sun-bright armory !

Princely pavilions, screen'd by many a fold
 Of crimson cloth, and topp'd with balls of gold ;
 Steeds, with their housings, of rich silver spun,
 Their chains and poytrels glittering in the sun ;
 And camels, tufted o'er with Yemen's shells
 Shaking in every breeze their light-ton'd bells !
 But yester-eve, so motionless around,
 So mute was this wide plain, that not a sound
 But the far torrent, or the locust-bird
 Hunting among the thickets, could be heard ;
 Yet hark ! what discords now of every kind,
 Shouts, laughs, and screams are revelling in the wind !
 The neigh of cavalry ; the tinkling throngs
 Of laden camels and their drivers' songs ;
 Ringing of arms, and flapping in the breeze
 Of streamers from ten thousand canopies ;
 War-music, bursting out from time to time
 With gong and tymbalon's tremendous chime ;
 Or, in the pause, when harsher sounds are mute,
 The mellow breathings of some horn or flute ;
 That far off, broken by the eagle note
 Of th' Abyssinian trumpet, swell and float.' p. 74.

The battle inclines at first to the side of the prophet, when Azim suddenly appears in the ranks of the caliph, and sweeps before him the hosts of the unfaithful. There is grandeur in Mokanna's unmoveableness during the rout of his army.

'In vain Mokanna, midst the general flight,
 Stands, like the red moon, on some stormy night
 Among the fugitive clouds that, hurrying by,
 Leave only her unshaken in the sky !' p. 81.

His ferocity is as terrible and as strongly given.

' ——— the sole joy his baffled spirit knows
 In this forc'd flight, is—murdering as he goes :
 As a grim tiger, whom the torrent's might,
 Surprises in some parch'd ravine at night,
 Turns, e'en in drowning, on the wretched flocks
 Swept with him in that snow-flood from the rocks,
 And, to the last, devouring on his way,
 Bloodies the stream he hath not power to stay ! p. 82.

The prophet is compelled to shut himself up in a walled city, and there, after practising several impostures upon his

surviving adherents, to keep up their faith and zeal, he invites them to a feast, where he promises to unfold his miraculous face, and then turn it upon the foe, to smite him 'like a sunstroke of the desert.' He prudently poisons them all before unveiling, and laughs at them in their agonies. Zelica, whose only charm now is, that she is his victim, is summoned by a dying messenger, to witness the spectacle, and partake of the beverage.

' ————— By the glimmering light,
Of the pale dawn, mix'd with the flare of brands
That round lay burning, dropp'd from lifeless hands,
She saw the board in splendid mockery spread,
Rich censers breathing—garlands overhead—
The urns, the cups, from which they late had quaff'd,
All gold and gems, but what had been the draught?
Oh! who need ask, that saw those livid guests,
With their swoll'n heads sunk black'ning on their breasts,
Or looking pale to heaven, with glassy glare.' &c. p. 97.

The prophet continues anxious about his personal attractions to the last, and that the enemy may not have a sight of him, dead or alive, he plunges into a cistern of burning drugs, which utterly consume him. Zelica, not having drunk quite enough poison, is left the only living thing in the city. She puts on the prophet's veil, and approaches the enemy to invite a death wound. This she receives from Azim—upon which a suitable explanation follows, and the matter is ended.—For Mr. Moore's sake, we hope this story is founded in fact. Human nature is much better able than he to bear the weight of its absurdity. This is, we believe, his first attempt at the violent and awful in poetry, and if it is a fair specimen of his talent that way, he cannot hurry back too fast to his marvellous ballads, where it is no sin to turn the terrible into the ridiculous. We need not try to soften this, by adding that the poem has powerful passages—we wish it had more, and that its materials, which are often fine, had been better wrought.

We have next a short, unpretending, delicate poem, 'Paradise and the Peri,' in which Mr. Moore is quite at his ease, as the matter itself is light, and the strong heroick verse, which tried him so sorely before, is here given up for the gay and varied measure in which he has rejoiced all

his life. He acquaints us here with the travels of some aerial creature, which lives upon perfumes, in search of a gift that might propitiate heaven, and regain for her the blissful seat which her race had forfeited. She carries first the blood of a patriot, but in vain—the farewell sigh of self-sacrificing love, and still fails—but the tear of repentance, the offering of a broken and contrite heart, is accepted and with it the enraptured Peri. We must pass this over, not because it wants beauty or invention, nor, as our readers may begin to think, because it has nothing for us to find fault with—but we must spare a little room for a few extracts from Mr. Moore's finest work.

The story of the Fire-worshippers is perfectly simple and direct, with few characters and incidents, and almost every thing in it conspiring to exhibit the stern and melancholy patriotism of a Persian hero, and the unfortunate loves of himself and an Arabian beauty. The Fire-worshippers were 'those original natives of Iran or Persia, who adhered to their ancient faith, the religion of Zoroaster.' The poem gives us one of their fruitless struggles against their Arab masters. 'Al Hassan, the Arabian leader, is accompanied by his daughter, and for safety had placed her in a 'bower of freshness, 'upon a rough and bold steep. She is, however, discovered there by Hafed, the chieftain of the enemy, and as difficulties are only love's incentives in the ages of rapture, he soon finds his way to her bower and heart. Hinda is ignorant that her lover is a Fire-worshipper, the foe of her father and faith. She comes slowly to the knowledge of this, and betrays so much alarm when she thinks of his danger, that her father determines to send her back to Arabia. Hafed encounters the bark on its way, and carries Hinda to his fastness in the mountains, where she informs him that his retreat would be invaded that night by her father, who had learnt its approaches from a traitor. He sends her out of the reach of danger—the battle follows, and Hafed, the last survivor, kindles the funeral pyre, which he had raised near the shrine of the sun, and throws himself into the flame. Hinda witnesses this from the bark to which she had been conveyed, and plunges into the wave.

The description of Hafed's retreat on the mountain is novel and distinct. Mr. Moore rarely gives a picture that has so much of truth and originality, and takes such entire

possession of the imagination. It may be well to connect with this description, the conveyance of Hinda to her lover's retreat.

‘ There stood—but one short league away
From old Harmozia's sultry bay—
A rocky mountain o'er the sea
Of Oman beetling awfully.
A last and solitary link

Of those stupendous chains that reach
From the broad Caspian's reedy brink
Down winding to the Green-Sea beach.
Around its base the bare rocks stood,
Like naked giants, in the flood,

As if to guard the gulf across ;
While, on its peak that brav'd the sky,
A ruin'd temple tower'd, so high

That oft the sleeping albatross
Struck the wild ruins with her wing,
And from her cloud-rock'd slumbering
Started—to find man's dwelling there
In her own silent fields of air !
Beneath, terrifick caverns gave
Dark welcome to each stormy wave
That dash'd, like midnight revellers, in ;
And such the strange, mysterious din
At times throughout those caverns toll'd,
And such the fearful wonders told
Of restless sprites imprison'd there,
That bold were Moslem, who would dare,
At twilight hour, to steer his skiff
Beneath the Gheber's lonely cliff.

On the land side, those towers sublime,
That seem'd above the grasp of time,
Were sever'd from the haunts of men
By a wide, deep and wizard glen,
So fathomless, so full of gloom,

No eye could pierce the void between ;
It seem'd a place where Gholes might come
With their foul baaquets from the tomb,

And in its caverns feed unseen.

Like distant thunder, from below,
The sound of many torrents came ;

Too deep for eye or ear to know
If 'twere the sea's imprison'd flow,

Or floods of ever-restless flame.’ p. 177, 178.

'The day is lowering—stilly black
 Sleeps the grim wave, while heaven's rack
 Dispers'd and wild, 'twixt earth and sky
 Hangs like a shatter'd canopy!
 There's not a cloud in that blue plain
 But tells of storm to come or past;
 Here, flying loosely as the mane
 Of a young war-horse in the blast;
 There, roll'd in masses dark and swelling,
 As proud to be the thunder's dwelling!
 Whilst some, already burst and riven,
 Seem melting down the verge of heaven;
 As though the infant storm had rent
 The mighty womb that gave him birth,
 And, having swept the firmament,
 Was now in fierce career for earth.
 On earth 'twas yet all calm around,
 A pulseless silence, dread profound,
 More awful than the tempest's sound.
 The diver steer'd for Ormus' bowers,
 And moor'd his skiff till calmer hours;
 The sea-birds, with portentous screech,
 Flew fast to land; upon the beach
 The pilot oft had paus'd, with glance
 Turn'd upward to that wild expanse;
 And all was boding, drear and dark
 As her own soul, when Hinda's bark
 Went slowly from the Persian shore—' p. 191, 192.

Hafed is now out in his bark, and the two vessels are driven together in a furious storm.

'So wholly had her mind forgot
 All thoughts but one, she heeded not
 The rising storm—the wave that cast
 A moment's midnight, as it passed—
 Nor heard the frequent shout, the tread
 Of gathering tumult o'er her head—
 Clash'd swords and tongues that seem'd to vie
 With the rude riot of the sky.
 But hark!—that war-whoop on the deck—
 That crash, as if each engine there,
 Mast, sails, and all were gone to wreck,
 Mid yells and stampings of despair!
 Merciful heaven! what can it be?
 'Tis not the storm, though fearfully

The ship has shudder'd as she rode
O'er mountain waves.'

' When hark !—a second crash—a third—
And now, as if a bolt of thunder,
Had riv'n the labouring planks asunder,
The deck falls in—what horrors then !
Blood, waves, and tackle, swords and men
Come mix'd together through the chasm.'

' The yawning deck—the crowd that strove
Upon the tottering planks above—
The sail, whose fragments shivering o'er
The strugglers' heads, all dash'd with gore,
Flutter'd like bloody flags—the clash
Of sabres, and the lightning's flash
Upon their blades, high toss'd about,
Like meteor brands.' p. 196, 197.

Hinda is saved from the wreck, and carried senseless into
Hafed's bark.

' How calm, how beautiful comes on
The stilly hour, when storms are gone ;
When warring winds have died away,
And clouds, beneath the glancing ray,
Melt off, and leave the land and sea
Sleeping in bright tranquillity,—
Fresh as if day again were born,
Again upon the lap of morn !
When the light blossoms, rudely torn
And scatter'd at the whirlwind's will,
Hang floating in the pure air still,
Filling it all with precious balm,
In gratitude for this sweet calm,—
And every drop the thunder-showers
Have left upon the grass and flowers
Sparkles, as 'twere that lightning-gem
Whose liquid flame is born of them !

When, 'stead of one unchanging breeze,
There blow a thousand gentle airs,
And each a different perfume bears,—

As if the loveliest plants and trees
Had vassal breezes of their own
To watch and wait on them alone,
And waft no other breath than theirs.
When the blue waters rise and fall,
In sleepy sunshine mantling all ;

And ev'n that swell the tempest leaves
Is like the full and silent heaves
Of lover's hearts, when newly blest,
Too newly to be quite at rest!

Such was the golden hour, that broke
Upon the world, when Hinda woke
From her long trance, and heard around
No motion but the water's sound
Rippling against the vessel's side,
As slow it mounted o'er the tide.—' p. 198, 199.

' Shuddering she look'd around—there lay
A group of warriors in the sun
Resting their limbs, as for that day
Their ministry of death were done.
Some gazing on the drowsy sea,
Lost in unconscious reverie ;
And some, who seem'd but ill to brook
That sluggish calm, with many a look
To the slack sail impatient cast,
As loose it flagg'd around the mast.' p. 200.

' But now the bark, with livelier bound,
Scales the blue wave—the crew's in motion—
The oars are out, and with light sound
Break the bright mirror of the ocean,
Scattering its brilliant fragments round.
And now she sees—with horror sees
Their course is tow'rd that mountain hold
Those towers, that make her life-blood freeze.' p. 202.

' Their bounding bark drew near
The craggy base, she felt the waves
Hurry them tow'rd those dismal caves
That from the deep in windings pass
Beneath that mount's volcanic mass—
And loud a voice on deck commands
To lower the mast and light the brands !—
Instantly o'er the dashing tide
Within a cavern's mouth they glide,
Gloomy as that eternal porch,
Through which departed spirits go ;—
Not ev'n the flare of brand and torch
Its flickering light could further throw
Than the thick flood that boil'd below.
Silent they floated—as if each
Sat breathless, and too aw'd for speech

In that dark chasm, where even sound
 Seem'd dark,—so sullenly around
 The goblin echoes of the cave
 Mutter'd it o'er the long black wave.
 As 'twere some secrets of the grave!
 But, soft—they pause—the current turns
 Beneath them from its onward track ;—
 Some mighty, unseen barrier spurns
 The vexed tide, all foaming, back.
 And scarce the oar's redoubled force
 Can stem the eddy's whirling force ;—
 When, hark !—some desperate foot has sprung
 Among the rocks—the chain is flung—
 The oars are up—the grapple clings,
 And the toss'd bark in moorings swings.' p. 203, 204.

They ascend the mountain.

' ——— The steepy labyrinth led
 Through damp and gloom—'mid crash of boughs,
 And fall of loosen'd crags that rouse
 The leopard from his hungry sleep,
 Who, starting, thinks each crag a prey,
 And long is heard from steep to steep,
 Chasing them down their thundering way !
 The jackal's cry—the distant moan
 Of the hyæna, fierce and lone ;—
 And that eternal, saddening sound
 Of torrents in the glen beneath,
 As 'twere the ever dark profound
 That rolls beneath the bridge of death !' p. 205.

It would be as idle to praise such poetry as this, as to point out its peculiar beauties. In parts, the thought and manner remind us of something we have seen elsewhere, and yet the effect is not lessened.

In the '*Light of the Haram*,' the only remaining poem, we have a lover's quarrel, with the reconciliation. The parties are the emperor and his favourite—the time and scene are the Feast of Roses, in the valley of Cashmere. The poem is one of our old fashioned Aprils—rain and sunshine, cool tears and soft gayety. There is besides, much of Mr. Moore's peculiar luxury of description. But how is it, that he cannot bring love and nature together, without some wanton association ? Take the description of the valley.

' Oh ! to see it at sunset, when warm o'er the lake
 Its splendour at parting a summer eve throws,

Like a bride, full of blushes, when ling'ring to take

A last look of her mirror at night ere she goes !?

' Or at morn, when the magic of daylight awakes

A new wonder each minute, as slowly it breaks,

Hills, cupolas, fountains, call'd forth every one

Out of darkness, as they were just born of the sun.

When the spirit of fragrance is up with the day,

From his Haram of night-flowers stealing away ;

And the wind, full of wantonness, woos like a lover

The young aspen-trees till they tremble all over.' p. 248, 249.

We will close with a picture of personal beauty, which we doubt not Mr. Moore would call the finest in the book.

' There's a beauty, forever unchangingly bright,

Like the long, sunny lapse of a summer day's light,

Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,

Till love falls asleep in its sameness of splendour.

This *was* not the beauty—oh ! nothing like this,

That to young Nourmahal gave such magic of bliss ;

But that loveliness, ever in motion, which plays

Like the light upon autumn's soft shadowy days,

Now here and now there, giving warmth as it flies

From the lips to the cheek, from the cheek to the eyes,

Now melting in mist and now breaking in gleams,

Like the glimpses a saint has of heav'n in his dreams !

When pensive, it seem'd as if that very grace,

That charm of all others, was born with her face,

And when angry, for ev'n in the tranquildest climes

Light breezes will ruffle the flowers sometimes—

The short, passing anger but seem'd to awaken

New beauty, like flow'rs that are sweetest when shaken.

If tenderness touch'd her, the dark of her eye

At once took a darker, a heavenlier dye,

From the depth of whose shadow, like holy revealings

From innermost shrines, came the light of her feelings !

Then her mirth—oh ! 'twas sportive as ever took wing

From the heart with a burst, like the wild-bird in spring ;

Illum'd by a wit that would fascinate sages,

Yet playful as Peris just loos'd from their cages.

While her laugh, full of life, without any control,

But the sweet one of gracefulness, rung from her soul ;

And where it most sparkled no glance could discover,

In lip, cheek or eyes, for she brighten'd all over,

Like any fair lake that the breeze is upon,

When it breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun.'

p. 254, 255.

There is some difficulty in plainly setting out Mr. Moore's failures, for the very reason that he is seldom *decidedly* bad. He wants the *unreserved* faults as well as excellences of a free and intrepid mind. The very elaboration, which mars his beauties, takes off their nativeness, and gives most of his pictures an artificial, unsatisfying sameness, serves also to soften or obscure his defects. Where the thought fails altogether, he attempts to make up for it by a sort of verbal stress, earnestness and flow—there are musical combinations of phrases in his merest expletives—he never has an undress for fine thoughts, nor any thing short of costly apparel for those which are every-day and common. It comes of this, no doubt, that we read him with so little variety of feeling, such an evenness of interest, without offence and without rapture.

We had something to say of the songs, with which three of the poems are interspersed, and of the disadvantages under which one labours, who travels to a distant country, by books only, for scenes, characters, sentiments, and all his poetical materials. But we are obliged to take an abrupt leave of our poet, having read his book and pursued our labour with very little satisfaction, and with a conviction, all along, that he might, but never will, do better.



ART. II. *The Friend of Peace, No. 1—8. By Philo Pacificus.*
Boston, Cummings & Hilliard.

THIS is a series of publications, issued by a member of the Peace Society of Massachusetts, and intended to direct the publick to a more attentive consideration of the subject of war. It is somewhat remarkable, that this society has received less encouragement and is in general looked upon with a less favourable eye, than any other of the charitable and benevolent institutions that have lately been established here in such numbers. We are unwilling to believe for a moment, that this disinclination to the Peace Society can be at all connected with one feature in it, which ought rather to operate in its favour—we mean the circumstance that the plan originated among ourselves, and was not, like most of these institutions, borrowed from England. In this case our plan